

TOURIST DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEETING  
SUMMARY MINUTES  
MARCH 13, 2003 – CENTRAL FLORIDA ZOO, SANFORD

MEMBERS PRESENT:

M.M. “Red” McCullough – McCullough & Assoc.  
Bill Beuret – Maison et Jardin Restaurant  
Helen Stairs – Helen Stairs Theatre  
Frank Fry – Holiday Inn Altamonte  
Jay Sheppard – Best Western Marina Hotel  
Linda Marshall – SpringHill Suites Altamonte

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dick Van Der Weide - Board of County Commissioners  
Pat Freeman – Altamonte Springs City Commission  
Bob Dallari – Council of Local Governments in Seminole County

STAFF PRESENT:

Sally Sherman – Deputy County Manager  
Kathryn Townsend – Seminole County CVB  
Karen Brown – Seminole County CVB  
Laura Richeson – Bennett & Company  
Ann E. Colby – County Attorney’s Office  
Doug Barclay – Central Florida Sports Commission  
Fran Sullivan – Seminole County CVB

GUESTS:

Jason Weeks – Altamonte Sports  
Dana Hirshburg – Homewood Suites Lake Mary  
Maggie Shoemaker – Homewood Suites Lake Mary  
Brent Nelson – Central Florida Sports Commission  
Bruce Skwarlo – Orlando Marriott Lake Mary  
Penny Leffel – Courtyard By Marriott/SpringHill Suites Sanford  
Rebecca Rhodes – Embassy Suites Orlando North  
Stephanie Andry – Residence Inn  
Marilyn Burnell – Ramada Inn  
Rick Love – Ramada Inn  
Joe Montisano – Central Florida Zoo  
Andrea Farmer – Central Florida Zoo  
Linda Reynolds – Sem. Co./Lake Mary Reg. Chamber of Commerce  
Shari O’Hara – SpringHill Suites Altamonte

**CALL TO ORDER**

Call to order by the Chair at 12:30 p.m. followed by introductions.

**APPROVAL OF JANUARY 9, 2003 MINUTES**

Motion, second (Bill Beuret/Red McCullough) and carried to approve the minutes of the January 9, 2003 meeting.

**STAFF REPORTS**

**Financial** – Kathryn Townsend reminded members there was no January meeting and reported December revenue was \$117,067.00. January revenue was 1% above projection. Total tax collections for fiscal year 02-03 were even with the previous fiscal year. Flat revenue projections for this year keep us approximately 24% below pre-9-11. She made a correction to the budget report due to a formula error. Members received a corrected copy. The budget remains unremarkable.

**Sales** – Karen Brown highlighted her report with updates on the upcoming Hospitality Night, Family & Friends promotion, Third Annual Tourism Awards Luncheon, Co-op Opportunities, and recent and upcoming trade shows. Red McCullough commended Karen Brown for easy accessibility of leads and expressed surprise that only four hotels made use of them in February. Fran Sullivan was recognized for her work in preparing the 2002-2003 Trade Show/Conference Report for discussion under Old Business.

**Information Inquiries** – Fran Sullivan noted ad placements expected to be strong lead generators are indeed meeting our expectations. In February about twice as many people indicated they learned about Seminole County from the internet than from a brochure or visitor guide. Leads from advertising are posted on the website.

**Central Florida Sports Commission** – Doug Barclay introduced himself. For the past two months he has been busy getting up to speed as the Central Florida Sports Commission's new Seminole County Sports Marketing Manager. In addition to events Kevin Coulthart was working on, the Sports Commission is looking at some new events. He hopes to bring substantially more sports business to Seminole County including many more soccer tournaments and baseball and softball events. Hotel leads for the second of two tournaments for the Seminole 7 Soccer Series were sent out this week. Doug gave updates on past and upcoming events. Negotiations to reduce the bid fee for the 2003 Got Milk? Soccer Shootout Regional Championships are in the final stages. The Sports Commission plans to present a request for funding at the April meeting.

**PR & Marketing** – Laura Richeson circulated the February issue of Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel containing a large advertising placement. The same pull-out insert also ran in Newsweek Magazine. January activity included the New York Media Mission, continued media outreach and a mini-fam trip for an entertainment editor/photographer from Kansas City. Copies of recent news releases were attached. Seminole County received five full color pages in A Canadian Guide to the Sunshine State. The author spent several days here a year ago. Laura looks forward to the May issue of Southern Living which will focus on natural attractions. Laura spoke with the writer at the Atlanta Media Mission. She noted Southern Living is an expensive ad placement but it is one of our strongest lead generators. Our co-op ad with Visit Florida highlights our vacation packages. This year we purchased an ad in the Daytona International Speedway Fan Guide which was mailed with advance-purchase tickets. Members received a copy of a special insert targeting drive markets. The insert appeared in the spring edition of several national magazines. Laura announced she will be making calls for a group fam coming up in May and thanked industry members for their continued generosity. Sally Sherman thanked Red McCullough for his email message to all the hoteliers, alerting them of the e-leads on our website. Questions and discussion followed.

**Executive Report** – Sally Sherman gave an update on the status of the Tourism Director position. Bill Beuret will serve as the TDC's representative at the second round of interviews. It is hoped a final decision will be made by the end of April. Over 40 people attended a meeting to meet and welcome Doug Barclay on March 6 at the SpringHill Suites in Sanford. Occupancy and decreased revenue are major concerns. Occupancy figures showed some improvement in February. Sanford continues to seek funding for the parking garage for the Convention Center. Seminole County has hired an architect and engineer to begin working on the design. Discussion about funding options is slated for a County Commission work session in May. The importance of this meeting was stressed and everyone was strongly urged to attend. Sally Sherman will confirm the date at the April TDC meeting. Discussion followed. Red McCullough recalled the TDC Board strongly voted against the Convention Center at the February 2002 meeting. Linda Marshall suggested a written statement of the TDC's position to be presented to County Commissioners. Sally Sherman affirmed TDC members' right to voice their opinion. There was general agreement that the TDC and hotel general managers should be represented. The Secretary was directed to pull the minutes of the February 2002 meeting minutes for discussion and review at the April meeting. At that time the Chair will call for a motion to appoint a representative to make a formal presentation to County Commissioners in May.

## **OLD BUSINESS** –

**Status Report – Travel Review Subcommittee** – Bruce Skwarlo gave a brief status report on behalf of the subcommittee. After initial review of the trade show report, the group requested additional information pertaining to international show expenses. The group concluded that trade shows, particularly international shows, are not excessive. For one or two there has been some difficulty tracking the return on our investment, but in general everything is in order. Mr. Skwarlo observed the trade show budget is considerably less than anticipated and was impressed by the cost-effective expenditures. No cuts are recommended at this time. In the future the committee suggests re-evaluating multi-year shows that cannot be quantified after the second or third year. Questions and comments followed.

**Seminole County Sports Training Center** - Sally Sherman indicated the agreement with the US Soccer Federation expires in April 2003. This is very timely and gives us an opportunity to explore options for that facility. Sally will do further research relative to the development order, prohibited ticket sales provision and water conservation restrictions. Interest in use of the facility has been expressed by an individual, but more information is needed to warrant moving forward with the request.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**GENERAL DISCUSSION/ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Jay Sheppard informed members beginning tomorrow a portion of Seminole Blvd. in Sanford will be closed for a year to relocate the road 10 feet from the lake to make room for the Riverwalk project. He noted plans for the project do not include retail space, boutiques or shops. Brief discussion followed.

**HOSPITALITY UPDATE** - Penny Leffel stated occupancy at Courtyard By Marriott and SpringHill Suites Sanford has remained flat in the last year. Candlewood Suites with 123 units is scheduled to open soon in Lake Mary and construction of a Hampton Inn with approximately 100 rooms is planned. Penny added she heard of a committee being formed to request a moratorium from the County on further hotel construction. Questions and discussion followed.

**NEXT MEETING DATE AND LOCATION** – April 10, 2003 at Holiday Inn, Altamonte Springs.

**ADJOURNMENT** - There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 1:40 p.m.